Book Reviews

The Special Pathological Anatomy and Pathogenesis of the Circulatory, Respiratory, Renal and Digestive Systems, including the Liver, Pancreas and Peritoneum. Horst Oertel, Strathcona Professor of Pathology, McGill University. XIII and 640 pp. $8.00. Renouf Publishing Co., Montreal, 1938.

A new book by so well known a teacher as Professor Oertel demands more than ordinary attention. A feeling seems to be abroad that special pathological anatomy is a dead issue—its place has been taken by biochemistry, biophysics. Not so, according to Professor Oertel. Rather, is it still the basis of our clinical interpretations of disease. You should by all means read the introduction. There is more "meat" in it than in most introductions. We are there made acquainted with Professor Oertel's confession of faith in regard to medical teaching and in particular the teaching of pathology. He draws the distinction between "instruction" and "education". The ordinary medical man, whether student or practitioner, may be informed but he is not educated. He quotes Helmholtz's definition of education as "The ability to distinguish what is true from what is apparently true", in other words, to have the power of observation and possess the logical mind, to sort out the wheat from the chaff. No doubt, the weakness of the medical man in this particular is due to the fact that the student owing to the demands of examiners of various bodies, scholastic and licensing, sets himself exclusively to the acquisition of sufficient facts to enable him to meet the immediate requirements of the situation, but has no time or perhaps no vision to lay bare the principles underlying the origins and sequences of these facts. Professor Oertel also thinks, with Schmorl, that a classical education fits a man far better for his future profession than do the current school systems "which are, as so frequently in present day experimental medicine, based on generalizations deduced from single sets of results, largely by test tube and scales, not by a collective comparison of actual manifold experiences and findings of diseased tissues and by logical consideration of the validity of conclusions." With all of this the present reviewer, at least, finds himself entirely in accord.

It will be noticed that there are no illustrations in this book. No doubt, this is with a purpose. Illustrations are costly and take up room. Their presence in a work on special pathological anatomy tends to emphasize the lesion rather than the pathogenesis, a situation which the author desires to get away from. Space is therefore left for the discussion of the more important matters of the causes, development, and effects of disease processes. No doubt, too, the author considers that the gross and microscopic pathology of the various organs are sufficiently dealt with in class, so that the student and the eventual practitioner have already obtained a working knowledge from which, with guidance they may deduce safe clinical principles. Accordingly, only sufficient reference is made to embryology, anatomy, gross pathological anatomy, and pathological histology to refresh the memory and to bring out any recent facts of importance. Thus the field is left open for the discussion of principles.

As would be expected, the author manifests a wide acquaintance with the literature. In discussing the pathogenesis of the various lesions he quotes freely, giving the leading views, pro and con, often adding a helpful comment or criticism of his own, and citing appropriate illustrative cases from his own experience and that of his colleagues and associates. On moot points he is candid, and where there is doubt he says so. One cannot help concluding that Professor Oertel's book is a safe guide to the understanding of disease (as opposed to mere lesions). It fills a need which many teachers of pathology have recognized for years, and which no previous book has fully met. We consider that every medical practitioner would be the better for a knowledge of the subjects discussed in it. The book makes decidedly for the better appreciation of the principles underlying the causes, manifestations, and results of disease processes. It is a book that is most commendable.

Tuberculosis Among Children and Young Adults. J. Arthur Meyers, Ph.D., M.D., F.A.C.P. 2nd ed., 401 pp. $4.50. C. C. Thomas, Springfield, Ill., 1938.

This book offers considerable food for thought to the student and graduate interested in tuberculosis. One is impressed by the author's energy and eagerness to present all facts pertaining to this subject in a clear, unbiased manner. Each topic is summarized at the end of each chapter, the outstanding points are presented in order, making it relatively easy to find and read again any discussion that has been of particular interest. While having definite ideas regarding certain phases, yet the author is not dogmatic regarding them. The first section, "Tuberculosis in Infancy" is well presented. All recent advances, particularly in regard to the locating of open cases, and their importance in protecting infants and children, by preventing first infection tuberculosis, are discussed. It is well for those growing over-ambitious in the use of BCG vaccine to read the author's remarks in chapter nine. After doing so, the reviewer believes that we should be a little more cautious in the use of this, and it would be better to proceed with a small number of well controlled cases than to use it wholesale, as is now being done in many centres.

Part II is of particular interest to those engaged in public health and child welfare work. One is impressed with the amount of work to be done before this scourge is controlled. The whole book is full of interesting points; important phases are enlarged upon, and those pertaining to other subjects more attached to other fields are lightly but clearly dealt with. It can be heartily recommended.

A Textbook of Histology. E. V. Cowdry. 2nd ed., 600 pp., illust. $7.00. Lea & Febiger, Philadelphia, 1938.

It is evident that the conventional method of presentation of histology has, in this book, undergone a great change. No more do we find in the foreground a figure attempting to embrace in itself the various views on the structure of protoplasm—a figure which has no counterpart in nature; no more do we labour over dreary descriptions of dead and withered cell corpses. No longer are we enjoined to accept as the most important evidential documents those particoloured pictures of mummified and painted "sections", which have little more likeness to the natural tissues than a kaleidoscope view has to a landscape. Instead of these museum specimens we meet the living cells in their natural environment, with water in its rôle as the essential vital medium. Here the blood is rightly held up as the principal integrator of the body; here it is histologically "dissected" and laid before the student in the light of this pregnant conception. Integration is the guiding principle, the *Leitmotiv*, of this volume. Following the cinema-like description of the living cells of the blood, blood vessels and heart, there is an account of absorptive drainage into the blood, and then one of the spleen and reticulo-endothelial system as they are related to the blood and to the body as a whole. Next we have the ductless glands, grouped under the caption "Chemical Integration by Endocrine Products in the Blood Stream", and this discourse leads naturally to the organs which are concerned with the intake of water, nutriment, accessory food factors and removal of waste, namely, those of the digestive system and its accessories. The heading "Oxygen Consumption and Carbon Dioxide Elimination" ushers in a graphic description of the respiratory system, where may be found the latest reports on bronchial movements, alveolar epithelium, interalveolar pores, cilia-induced currents, and such like points. Numerous tables summarize knowledge, as that on the "Divisions of the Respiratory Tree" on page 349.